# THE CASE AGAINST PROTECTIONISM

Protectionism masquerading as solidarity: miners protest importation of South African coal with signs reading "Fight Oppression."

**25¢**

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# DON'T BUY 'BUY AMERICAN'

**KIM MOODY**

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# 1. THE DEAD END OF PROTECTIONISM

**"...help maintain America's standard of living, by staying away from Van Heusen shirts." --Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, AFL-CIO.**

The clothing workers, like many other American workers, are threatened with unemployment due to foreign competition. In the particular case referred to in the above quotation, the Van Heusen shirt company opened plants in Taiwan instead of in the US.

In other industries, jobs are threatened by the competitive advantage many foreign companies producing the same products have on the world market.

**In all these cases, the unions have turned to a protectionist policy. That is, a policy that attempts to protect the jobs of workers in the US by boycotting foreign goods, advocating higher tariffs on those goods, or in some way preserving the US market for US-produced goods.**

More often than not workers are quick to support these protectionist policies because they feel this will protect their jobs.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to explain why these protectionist policies are dangerous traps for American workers.

To begin with, the problem of competition between workers of different countries for the same work—producing shirts, digging coal, or whatever—is rooted in the competition between capitalist firms or corporations.

To a greater degree than ever before the world capitalist market is one market. A surprisingly small number of giant international corporations compete with each other for every corner of that market.

So far as the owners of these corporate giants are concerned every nation is fair game. German companies compete with American companies in both Germany and America, and everywhere else. The

same is true of companies based in all of the top 10 or 15 industrial countries.

**These billion dollar operations don't care whether they reap their profits in dollars, pounds, francs, or yen, so long as the profits are real, big, and growing.**

For the past several years, this competition has grown sharper. As fantastic rates of inflation travel from country to country and currencies change value every day, these giant companies seek the cheapest sources of materials and labor.

**If labor costs rise in the US or Britain, the corporations look to Taiwan, South Africa, Hong Kong or other places where labor is cheaper.**

The pro-capitalist union leaders in this country believe they can save jobs through protectionism. But, from a capitalist economic standpoint, this will not work.

The capitalist opens a new plant in Taiwan or elsewhere only because he believes he can make a bigger profit. If his profits are eaten up by high tariffs or lack of a market he will close the plant. It does **not** follow that he will then open a new plant or re-open an old one, already known to be less profitable, in the US.

No, the capitalist, Van Heusen or any other, will look for some other place or industry to invest.

Furthermore, tariffs which might be high enough to keep Van Heusen from going abroad in the first place would ruin **all** American capitalists by setting off massive trade wars and preventing foreign investments. They would therefore never be tolerated.

So protectionist policy may simply not work. But there is even more to it than that.

**The logic of a protectionist outlook ties the union to the needs of the bosses. US companies threaten to move abroad or close up shop unless the union agrees to cheapen the price of the labor of their members relative to that of foreign workers. Protectionist logic demands that the unions accede to such threats, and cheapen the price of labor by helping to keep wage increases small and allowing various forms of speed-up.**

With their fifty-year history of protecting the garment industry in America, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers represent some of the lowest paid workers in the western world. And, working conditions in the garment industry are appalling. That is the fruit of the protectionist attempt to "maintain America's standard of living."

Nixon's entire wage-price scheme was meant to cheapen American labor. And it worked. Wage gains in the last year, for example, were 8% in the US, but 25% in Japan and Italy.

Various Japanese firms are now building plants in the US. German chemical companies are investing in the American south because they find cheaper labor there than in Europe.

**In other words, today, protectionism means making US labor cheap labor.**

The capitalists, as a class, want the unions in their respective countries to push a protectionist policy also because it pits worker against worker. That is, it forces the workers themselves to compete.

If US unions can boycott foreign goods, it is also true that the unions in countries like German, Britain, and Japan can boycott US



goods. It cuts all ways.

This free-for-all atmosphere steers the unions in the various countries away from the real way to fight the problem: international solidarity.

International solidarity sounds very "foreign" or at least far out to most American workers. In fact, it is a very practical and possible way to produce real results.

Remember, Van Heusen goes to Taiwan in search of cheap labor. Suppose labor in Taiwan wasn't so cheap?

It used to be Japan that was thought of as the leading source of cheap labor and materials (themselves cheap only because labor is cheap). But Japan has a strong trade union movement and Japanese wages are no longer so much lower than American wages.

If the labor movements of all these countries had worked together, supported each other's strikes, and conducted international strikes against international corporations like GM, Ford and ITT, then the wages of workers in Europe, Africa and Asia would be closer to those in the US. If that were true, US companies would not have as much reason to invest abroad.

**The most effective way to save jobs here is to fight for higher wages for workers throughout the world.**

In cases like Taiwan or South Africa, where the bulk of workers are not allowed real unions or bargaining, that means an out and out campaign by the world labor movement against those regimes. That would mean political support to opposition movements in those countries. It would mean taking on the US government's policy of support to fascist regimes like Taiwan and South Africa.

**If this weren't so tragic, it would hilarious: protectionist projectionists protest ABC's plan to film Vidal's "Burr" in England.**

# 2. THE BIG STEAL

**The last article presented the general arguments against supporting protectionist policies like "Buy America" or import quotas which draw US workers into a fight with workers in other countries instead of building international labor solidarity.**

Now we will look at the fruits of protectionism in a specific case—the steel industry.

The steel industry in the US faced serious international competition in the 1960's. In fact, it has had a significant trade deficit for several years.

Until recently, foreign steel, largely Japanese and German, has been able to under-price US steel on both the foreign and domestic markets.

There were several reasons given by the steel industry. US wages were much higher than those in Japan and Germany, US labor was not keeping ahead of those countries in productivity, and American steel was produced by anitquated methods.

**There is a good deal of truth in all of these arguments, However, they neglected to mention that US steel bosses take about twice the profit of their Japanese or German colleagues.**

So, if US steel prices were habitually higher, one central reason was that good old American high profit margin.

At an International Socialists Educational Conference a few weeks ago, Ed Mann, president of Steel Workers Local 1462, put it this way: "The steel companies don't really believe in this system any more than we do. They just want to get everything they can and run before it collapses."

Well, we can't read the steel bosses' minds, but in any case the leaders of the United Steel Workers of American (USWA) took the bosses' word for it. They were prepared to protect the American steel industry.



**President I.W. Abel of the United Steel Workers launched a propaganda campaign to convince steel workers that their only hope was to join in with the companies, and sacrifice to protect their jobs by protecting the industry for foreign competition.**

The union even produced a movie about the threat of layoffs called "Where's Joe?" which was supposed to scare people into speeding up their work and giving up the right to strike.

## "PRODUCTIVITY" = SPEEDUP

Backed up by the very real drop in steel employment during the 1960's, these propaganda moves had some effect.

Abel was able to get "productivity committees" in the 1971 contract. As everyone knows, he has since outdone himself by abandoning the right to strike until 1980.

In the 1974 contract, wage gains were held down to 8% for the first year—which can only mean that inflation will eat up steel worker wages as they have everyone else's.

**In other words, Abel's program for protecting the jobs and living**

**standards of American steel workers is to speed up work and hold down wages.**

That, of course, is the program of the bosses. That is what lies at the root of all protectionist approaches to the problem.

For the steel corporations, this program is realistic, patriotic and effective. In fact, it works!

Indeed, steel sales have risen dramatically since 1971. The productivity of US steelworkers has helped make that possible by rising 3.6% in 1971 and 5.9% in 1972.

The unprecedented international business boom of 1973 kept sales soaring. But what did all of this do for steel workers?

**For one thing, it did not protect their jobs. In 1967 there were 424,000 production workers in steel. By 1970 this was down even farther to 403,000.**

In 1971 and 1972, under the new contract, steel production jobs continued to fall as sales and production grew. Steel jobs were 367,000 in 1971 and 364,000 in 1972.

Steel production in net tons grew from 120.4 million in 1971 to 133.2 million in 1972.

In other words, American steel bosses were protected by fewer workers producing more steel—courtesy of the leadership of the United Steel Workers of America!

In 1973 steel production grew to 148 million tons and employment grew somewhat to 386,000.

The reason for this increase in jobs, however, was that the enormous demand from the 1973 boom forced the steel bosses to use the less efficient, more old fashioned, open hearth furnaces they had been hoping to retire from use.

**The 1973 boom, however, gave way to the 1974-75 slump and the industry began putting these olf furnaces to rest.**

The industry wants to protect itself by modernizing. This they are doing by installing the more efficient electrical furnaces and basic oxygen process.

These inovations will tend to protect US steel production on the world and domestic markets, but only by decreasing the number of jobs in the US.

Steel employment will never again rise to its 1967 or even its 1973 levels—and the USWA's protectionist policy is helping to make sure.

From the workers' point of view, the result of protectionism, the alliance of the union with the needs of the bosses, is a disaster: fewer jobs, declining working conditions, and a fall in real wages.

**So American steel is now in great shape on the world market. And why? Because now it's American workers who are cheap labor!**

There are other effects as well. For example, while the older furnaces remain in operation there are horrible safety hazards and accidents because the bosses won't spend the money even for minimal maintenance, since they'll be shut down fairly soon anyway.

The fight against the no-strike agreement is growing. Many steel militants know that the way to fight the loss of jobs is to fight for the shorter work week with no loss in pay.

Just as important is the need for the USWA to work closely with the steelworkers' unions in Japan, Germany and elsewhere to equalize wages on a world scale so the bosses won't attempt to make labor cheaper here.



# 3. COAL BOYCOTT: LEFT LABEL, SAME OLD WINE

**In the last two articles we have shown how a protectionist policy ties the union to the bosses and weakens the struggle of the workers. By protectionism we mean those policies that attempt to protect the jobs of American workers by protecting American industry from foreign competition.**

Socialists, who are internationalists, have realized that protectionism divides workers along national lines and harms the growth of a strong international workers movement.

It is easy enough to see that the other side of protectionist slogans like "buy American" is "to hell with the other guy." That not only weakens the international working class movement, itself still too weak, but, as we have shown in past articles, it doesn't even work for American workers.

**Recently, however, the United Mine Workers (UMW) have succeeded in confusing much of the left with a rather sophisticated version of protectionism.**

The Gulf Power Company, a sudsidiary of the Southern Company, contracted with Coal Exports South Africa, Ltd., for some 500,000 tons of low-sulphur coal for 1974 and another 750,000 tons for 1975. The reason the Southern Co. has turned to South African coal is simple. The cost of mining South African coal is $1.95 a ton as compared to $7.65 for US coal.

South African coal is cheap because of low pay and slave labor conditions under which black miners in that white-supremacist state are forced to work.

UMW members in Alabama have staged two one-day strikes against the use of South African coal and the UMW promised a mass demonstration in Mobile to prevent the unloading of that coal.

Certainly the sight of black and white miners in Alabama striking together in apparent opposition to the racist regime in South Africa is

enough to turn the head of any revolutionary worker.

According to the UMW Journal, the UMW opposes the import of South African coal "both because jobs for American miners will be lost and because the South African coal is produced under slave labor conditions."

**In fact, the UMW's opposition to South African coal is nothing but protectionism with a good cover story. The logic of this policy is every bit as protectionist and American chauvinist as the Garment Workers' "Buy American" campaign or the Steel Workers codling of US steel monopolists.**

The UMW is apparently fighting the Southern Company. But that corporation is not a coal producer. It is a coal user. In fact, beneath its rhetoric, the UMW is demanding that the Southern Company buy only from American coal producers.

Any way you read it, that spells "buy American." And that is how they propose to save American jobs.

And what does saving American jobs mean in this case? It means counterposing American miners' jobs to South African miners' jobs. That is, as the UMW says, if the Southern Company uses South



African coal, thereby using South African labor, "jobs for American miners will be lost."

And if Southern and everyone else uses only American coal, that is American labor, what happens to South African labor? Or, to put it another way, "to hell with the other guy."

When one group of workers, here or abroad, goes on strike and other unions boycott the goods being struck, as in the UFW lettuce and grape boycott, that is an act of labor solidarity. Similarly, when the UMW goes on strike, it should try to prevent all coal shipments and deliveries, domestic and foreign, in order to weaken the bosses. But there is no strike of South African miners or of UMW members involved here.

**The UMW's "boycott" of South African coal is neither an act of solidarity with African miners nor an atttack on American coal operators. It is a "boycott" in favor of American coal operators and against South African coal operators. Regardless of the cover story or anyone's intentions, the solidarity here is between the UMW and the US coal operators.**

Anyone who can interpret siding with one's own bosses against the bosses of another country as an act of international labor solidarity is, indeed, confused.

Of course, the UMW leadership has stated that it intends to work with the Miners' International Federation (a loose grouping of miners' unions in non-Communist countries), the British Trades Union Congress, and other labor groups to oppose the policies of the South African regime. Good. It is long past time that US unions got involved in fighting on questions like this.

In particular, we hope the UMW will fight US support to South Africa's racist regime. We hope the UMW will give financial aid and any other help when South African miners strike.

But none of this changes the character of the UMW's attempt to save American miners' jobs by imposing protectionist policies. Even if it is all sincere it is still a cover story for the wrong policy.

**Banning imports, raising import tariffs, cut-throat competition on the world market; these are the weapons of imperialism, not of labor solidarity. Throughout the twentieth century protectionist policies have helped push aggressive capitalist nations into war. Again and again, under pro-capitalist or Stalinist leadership, the working classes of one country have taken up arms against those of another.**

Like the protectionism that preceeded them, each war has had a better cover story than the one before: the war to end all war, the war to make the world safe for democracy, etc. Labor protectionism has been nothing but the junior partner in this savage process.

The new leadership of the miners union is playing the game of the pro-capitalist "statesmen" who run the other big unions: Woodcock of the Auto Workers, Abel of the Steel Workers, and so on. The way to protect the jobs of the bituminous miners is to fight for a contract that protects those jobs through a shorter work week at a full week's pay. The UMW could also do more to fight strip mining, which ruins the land and cuts labor to a minimum, than its current half-hearted Congressional lobbying effort.

According to UMW President Arnold Miller, intensive investment by big coal operators in western strip mining could eliminate 25—40,000 jobs in the next five years. Why not strike against that?

# 4. GARMENT: SAVING JOBS BY CUTTING WAGES

**For the past few months the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) have been calling for a boycott of Van Heusen shirts. Unlike the recent Farah boycott, the Van Heusen campaign is not in support of a strike and is not an act of labor solidarity.**

The ACWA is asking consumers not to buy Van Heusen shirts because they are produced by Chinese workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. To buy Van Heusen shirts, the ACWA says, is to "undermine America's standard of living."

The brochure publicizing this campaign has a small dose of liberal sympathy for these Chinese workers who earn as little as 25c an hour. But its real concern is that these shirts are not made by American clothing workers. Its method for solving the problem of real and potential unemployment in the garment industry is to boycott foreign goods—buy American, to hell with the other guy.

## PROTECTING THE BOSS

**Underneath what appears to be an attack on the Phillips Van Heusen company is in fact a long-standing policy of protecting one set of garment bosses from another. Companies that move to Asia, or to the South and Southwest of America in order to escape union wage levels gain a competitve advantage over other companies. They are able to produce for less and underprice the others.**

This problem has always been with the garment industry. In the 1920's and 30's garment shops tried to move from the cities to the suburbs. In the 1940's and 50's they moved to the South and Southwest. Now, some are moving to Asia.

The ACWA, as well as the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), developed a means of dealing with this problem as early as the 1920's. They didn't use the the obvious policy of



organizing the South—very little of that has been done even up to this day.

Farah is more the exception than the rule. No, the ACWA's policy was to "stabilize" the economic position of the employers in the big urban areas where ACWA and the ILGWU were strong.

**"Stabilization" was nothing but a means of protecting those employers who stayed in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia from those who moved out. It was a program of subsidizing those companies who cooperated with the union.**

**The unions helped the bosses make their shops more efficent, modernize management techniques, push labor through reactionary incentive and piece-work systems and even lent the bosses money through the ACWA's bank.**

**The unions went even farther. When new shops were unionized in low wage areas, like Texas, it was ACWA policy not to bring their wages up to the standard of the big northern cities.**

That is, stabilization meant giving even the run-away shop bosses a break. Today, this still holds. While the Farah strike was an important victory, the fact remains that Farah wages are considerably lower than those of ACWA members in New York or other nothern cities.

## "STABILIZATION"

**"Stabilization," that is, protection, has above all meant the maintenance of low wages in the industry. Garment wages have always been among the lowest in the country.**

But over the years, the gap between average wages of manufacturing workers and those of garment workers has grown even larger. In 1950 garment workers averaged $44.64 a week compared to $58.32 for all manufacturing workers. That is, garment wages were about 75% of manufacturing wages.

By 1972, average weekly wages in garment were $93.96, as

**The garment bosses, well-known union-busters & wage-cutters, won ACWA leaders' praises with a spiffy protectionist label.**

compared to $154.89, or less than 60% of manufacturing wages.

**To protect the companies they deal with in the northern cities, the ACWA and ILGWU have allowed wages to stagnate.**

Naturally, union wages are higher than non-union wages. But they are not so much higher as to drive the unionized companies out of the market. All of this is carefully figured out as a matter of union policy. As with all protectionist and class collaborationist policies, where the union plays the company's game, the workers end up paying.

**In the garment industry, it is particularly women workers [mostly black and Latino] who pay. To maintain some political base in the membership, the union has traditionally won a half-decent wage scale for the most highly skilled workers. Still it is less than skilled workers earn in other industries.**

Huge numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled women workers, however, earn incredibly low wages. Even where women are able to average more than starvation wages, it is because they work at breakneck speed under the piece work and incentive systems.

While unionized women garment workers earn more than non-unionized women, the difference between them and male garment workers is often greater in the unionized areas of the industry. Many of the men's jobs, like cutter and presser, pay well above $5 an hour, but many women's jobs still pay less than $3. In the men's suit and coat industry, men averaged $3.97 an hour in 1973, but women, who are three-quarters of the work force, only $3.05.

The new ACWA contract has raised the average somewhat, but has maintained the wide gaps between men and women, skilled and unskilled. It has also left garment workers well behind other production workers, and well behind inflation.

The Van Heusen campaign must be viewed in the context of this overall protectionist policy. Because Van Heusen uses cheaper Asian labor, it is better able to compete on the US and world market. It can better afford shipping and advertising costs, and so on.

The ACWA boycott is an attempt to protect the other garment employers' competitive position by getting people here not to buy Van Heusen. In other words, the workers are supposed to take the side of one group of bosses against another.

**What that really means, of course, is that American workers are supposed to take sides against Asian workers; that is to fight against them for the jobs to be done for Van Heusen. But this international competition between workers cuts all ways. When workers compete in this manner the only way to "win" is to sell your labor for the lowest price.**

## A HEALTHY PROFIT MARGIN

The leaders of the ACWA and ILGWU know that the other side of the boycott is their traditional policy of keeping US wages down, well within the bounds of a healthy profit margin. The boycott helps them get away with it by focusing the attention of American workers on the alleged threat posed by the Asian workers, instead of on the rotten pro-employer policies of the leaders of the ACWA and ILGWU.

**With a different leadership and a different policy, the garment unions could wage a fight that would really be in the interest of**



**garment workers all over the world. First of all, the ACWA and ILGWU could finally get around to an aggressive organizing drive in the South and Southwest. The Farah strike was a first step, but there are still hundreds of companies like Farah that are unorganized and help hold down wages in the industry.**

At the same time, the unions could fight the foreign policy of this country's government that supports regimes like those in Taiwan, which prevent unionization, and supports old style colonialism in British Hong Kong. That imperialist foreign policy, of course, exists to protect firms like Van Heusen when they do go abroad.

The unions could extend material assistance to legal and illegal unions, national liberation movements, or other movements that help the workers of Asia and elsewhere smash the governments and bosses that prevent them from organizing and raising their own wages.

**In American-based multinational corporations like Van Heusen, the ACWA and ILGWU can work with workers' organizations around the world to have international bargaining. In other words, what the garment workers, here and around the world, need is a union policy that fights the employers here and extends real, active solidarity abroad. That is the only real alternative to cut-throat competition, growing unemployment, and low wages.**

**How Not To Fight Unemployment: Louis Stulberg, the President of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, calls for self-defeating import controls at a mass garment workers rally in New York.**

# 5. THE ANSWER TO COMPETITION—SOLIDARITY

**As the crisis of world capitalism grows sharper, competition on the world market becomes more savage. In their search for cheaper labor, the capitalists attempt to drag the workers into this competition. Whether this is done by forming multi-national corporations, by exporting capital or importing "foreign" goods, the capitalists try to hold down wages by threatening jobs at home.**

The unions try to protect American (or British, or Japanese or German) jobs by protecting the position of "their own" American (or British, or Japanese, or whatever) employers.

They do this by drumming up "Buy America" campaigns, by boycotting goods produced in other countries, or by supporting legislation designed to erect various kinds of trade barriers.

**In these articles we have shown, in particular with reference to the steel and garment industries, how this policy of protectionism is a disaster for the workers and how it fails to protect jobs.**

**There is, however, an alternative strategy for facing the very real problem of international competition.**

Any labor strategy that deals with the world market, and that is what we are dealing with, must be international in scope. As we have pointed out, capital seeks cheap labor in order to maximize profits.

From labor's point of view, everywhere, the central task is therefore to eliminate cheap labor.

But the workers of many Asian, African, and Latin countries are at a disadvantage. While in most countries these workers do have unions, they are weak in numbers and their unions short on resources.

Furthermore, in countries like Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, and others the political regimes make life even more difficult for the unions. That is one reason why US, European, and Japanese capital flows into these countries in the first place.



**The first thing US unions can do is to aid and support these unions in their fights against their employers and regimes.**

It will be argued, by George Meany, that US unions do aid unions in these countries. This "aid" is mostly a political snow job carried out in cooperation with the CIA.

If this "aid" has any function, it is to help US capital by creating docile unions with pro-US leadership. This is done as part of the bigger policy of the US government in supporting the very totalitarian governments that keep unionism down in the first place.

The political policy of the unions, however, can be changed—though we admit, right off, that it will take time and a mass rank and file movement to do it.

**A real policy of international solidarity begins with material aid to unionists when they are in struggle—not with donations to various CIA fronts.**

When garment workers in Hong Kong or Taiwan strike, or even think about striking, the US garment unions, the ACWA and the ILGWU, should offer financial assistance. US workers should refuse to handle these struck goods.

Equally important is the need for continuous political support. The whole structure of what is called "foreign aid" is nothing but a means of bolstering capitalism throughout the world. It is strategically most important, however, that US unions particularly support workers in countries where unionism tends to be the weakest, such as South Africa, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and today Chile.

Even today's unions have, on rare occasions and in moderate forms, conducted such actions. The recent world Congress of the International Transport Workers Federation, representing transportation unions in 140 countries including the US, voted for an international boycott of Chilean goods in protest of the treatment of unionists by the military regime there.

Transportation workers of all kinds (truckers, longshoremen, railroad workers) were called upon to refuse to handle Chilean goods on September 18—19, 1974.

The original motion by Swedish unionists, calling for an indefinite boycott, was meant to aid the underground workers' movement in Chile. A compromise was reached when strong opposition came from, as you might guess, the US union leaders.

**In fact, the US, Brazilian, and Mexican unions refused to participate. US participation could have been a reality if American Teamsters, longshoremen, and railroad workers had been pressuring their unions to fight the Chilean regime and the US government's support of that military dictatorship.**

## INTERNATIONAL BARGAINING

One of the most obvious ways to make international solidarity a reality is to establish international collective bargaining with the giant multinational corporations. For example, Van Heusen workers here and in Asia should bargain and strike together.

Again, in rare instances this has been done. A couple of years ago, unions throughout Europe called an international strike against Pirelli-Dunlop, the international tire makers.

Indeed, the shell of a structure for international bargaining has

**The fact that spreading fear and panic is basic to protectionist propaganda is underlined by this cartoon from "AFL-CIO News."**

existed for years. Virtually every trade and industry has an international organization, usually called an international trade secretariat, connected with one of the three major international labor federations.

The trouble is that these federations and secretariats are run by the same pro-capitalist, over-fed, weak-kneed bureaucrats who run our unions and those elsewhere.

**Just as we need rank and file movements in the US unions, so we need an international rank and file movement. Or, to put it another way, our rank and file movement must be internationalist in outlook.**

We must fight in our unions for the kinds of policies and actions we have outlined, and we must oppose the protectionist policies put forth by the bureaucrats to head off internationalism.

We can demand worldwide bargaining. Since the top union leaders meet internationally, and since we can't trust them, we can also demand international meetings of local officers, stewards and so forth.

For example, why can't stewards from Chrysler plants in the US,



Britain, Australia, Africa and other countries meet to discuss international bargaining strategy?

**There is nothing utopian about international bargaining and solidarity. Today's labor bureaucrats, however, shy away from its revolutionary consequences.**

They know that worldwide strikes and real support to workers fighting the rotten regimes spawned by international capital—that is, by imperialism—implies not only international trade unionism, but international political solidarity against these employers and governments.

And that, of course, is all too revolutionary for the well-paid, swivel-chaired labor leaders of today.

The interests of the ranks of labor, however, lie in an effective fight for a better life. Every day capital, the employers, become more intensely international. To wage a successful fight, labor must follow suit.

International solidarity is not simply a sentiment; for the workers it is an absolute necessity.

**International solidarity, fighting the employers, not protecting them, is the key to winning jobs and decent wages and working conditions.**

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